

October 2001

**NOTICE TO THE TRADE
USDA MEAT AND FISH SUPPLIERS**

Recent events in the Washington, D.C. area have substantially affected the timely delivery of mail to Department of Agriculture (USDA) offices in the headquarters complex and resulted in an overhaul of the mail handling procedures within USDA. To ensure the continued safety of all parties, mail destined for offices in the USDA headquarters complex will first be delivered to an off-site location where it will be screened and opened prior to final delivery.

In order to ensure timely receipt and security of sensitive information and data, AMS will no longer accept offers and bid information by mail. Offers must be submitted electronically by accessing the Domestic Electronic Bid Entry System (DEBES) via the Internet, or by facsimile (FAX), or by commercial express service, or by hand delivery. Procedures for submitting offers by each of these methods are contained in the appropriate program Announcement.

As a reminder and follow-up to our Industry Meeting in May 2001, all offers for red meat and fish products submitted to AMS after July 1, 2002, must be transmitted electronically through the DEBES website. Further information on the DEBES website and electronic transmission of offers can be found in the program Announcements or by contacting Henrietta Cooke on 202/720-2650.

If further information is needed concerning this Notice, please contact me.

/s/William T. Sessions
William T. Sessions, Chief
Livestock and Seed Program
Commodity Procurement Branch

10/26/01
DATE: